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"TIMOR-LESTE : IDENTIDADE DO SEU POVO E PERSPECTIVAS PARA O SEU FUTURO."

EAST TIMOR : A NATIONAL IDENTITY.

The political national consciousness is largely a question of will, but beyond that, the meeting of people around a past, habits and projects in common is a necessity to build a homogeneous Nation.

Do the Timorese have this consciousness of a common past and destiny, and do the Timorese feel it today ? This is the question I want to ask and will try to answer. I will do it through a few particularily interesting events in the Timorese history :

- The Waiwiku Waihal (XIVth - XVIIth century) notably described by Schulte Nordholt (1) is the first known experience of a large trans-ethnolinguistic political power.

- The appropriation by lot of groups of the Portuguese flag (as the sacred flag) (2) and the free interpretation given by the Timorese to the Catholic religion have become deep cultural links between people. Later, the religious school and the Jesuits seminar will have a large influence on the formation of almost all the political elites.

- The three *Manufahi* wars where most of the East Timorese fought together against the colonial occupation reinforced the national identity consciousness.

- Mauberism has become a commun denominator for all the timorese without distinction of group or origin. That means they want to take on their national identity and create a Nation together.

To resume, the fighting of the Timorese does not seem the expression of a recent aspiration to obtain a Nation but rather the modern expression of a very old will.

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(1) : "*The political system of the Atoni of Timor.*" M.Nijhoff, la Haye, 1971, 511 pages.

(2) : Elisabeth Traube, "*Cosmology and social life. Ritual exchange among the Mambai of East Timor.*" *The university of Chicago press, Chicago et Londres, 1986.*